

prepared to start a natural gas price war with the United States. Gazprom is, of course, the Russian gas company that is mostly owned by the government and controlled by Vladimir Putin. A price war would help them maintain their grip as being the biggest gas supplier in Europe, and it would discourage U.S. liquefied natural gas projects from ever being built.

What has the Obama administration done? The Obama administration has a documented history of delaying permits to American businesses that want to export our liquefied natural gas. Needless bureaucratic delays just deter energy production and producers from wanting to start these projects in the United States because it is so hard to get them approved, and that just drives up the cost. The administration's approach plays right into Vladimir Putin's hands.

This is not the time to add cost to American energy production. That will only help our adversaries more, and it will make our allies more dependent on energy—not from us but from places such as Russia and Iran and, of course, from other OPEC countries. This is not the time to shut down the production of American energy.

There are a lot of far-left, extreme environmentalists out there who want to make sure American energy resources are never used but stay in the ground. There are also a lot of Washington Democrats who are eager to give these environmental extremists everything they want—everything.

Last week in New Hampshire, Hillary Clinton was caught on tape promising one of these extremist supporters that the end of fossil fuel development on public land, she said, is “a done deal.” The end of exploration of fossil fuels on public land is “a done deal.” Well, it may be a done deal in her mind. It is also unrealistic, unwise, and unworkable. Take a look at it. Forty-one percent of America's coal production right now comes from public land; 22 percent of our crude oil comes from public land; 16 percent of our natural gas comes from public land; and Hillary Clinton, in her speech and her comments last Thursday in New Hampshire, said, in terms of any of that production, it is “a done deal.”

I remind my colleagues that energy is the master resource. America needs energy for our economy to grow. We need those jobs. Where are we supposed to get our energy if we don't get it from public lands? We can't power America's manufacturing on wind alone.

Instead of building new barriers to American energy production, we should be tearing down those barriers. The energy legislation we have been debating in this body actually includes ideas to help do that. One bipartisan idea in this legislation would help speed up the permitting process to export liquefied natural gas. It is bipartisan, with six Democratic cosponsors.

After all the environmental studies have been done, after everything has

been approved, it then takes an average of another 7 months for this administration to say yes or no on the permits. That is after everything has already been approved. Why would it take 7 additional months to get a decision by the administration? The Energy Department should be able to say yes or no, and this legislation says they should be able to do it within 45 days. This is going to force Washington to do its job in an accountable and timely way. That will help make sure other countries have options for where to get their energy, other than the concerns we have about a dominance of Russia, a dominance of Iran, and a change of the balance of power internationally.

It is time for America's energy policies to help American energy producers compete and to help those jobs in our energy security at home. That is how we are going to build our economy, how we are going to create American jobs, and how we are going to strengthen our national security.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE EL FARO

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, late last year a cargo container ship carrying 33 men and women left Florida from the Port of Jacksonville en route to Puerto Rico. It typically sailed back and forth, carrying cargo to and from San Juan, Puerto Rico, but this time it sailed directly into the path of a hurricane.

Two days later the crew sent what would be its final communication, reporting that the ship's engines were disabled and the vessel was left drifting and tilting, with no power, straight into the path of the storm.

Subsequent to that, despite an exhaustive search and rescue attempt by the Coast Guard in the days that followed, the El Faro and her crew were never heard from again. Only in one case, in desperately trying to do a search and rescue mission, did they find one decomposed body in a body-suit, but they could not find anybody else.

Since then, the National Transportation Safety Board—the agency charged with investigating the incident—has been working tirelessly to understand what happened. Why would the ship leave port when they knew there was a storm brewing and it was going to cross the path of where the ship was supposed to go?

Working with the U.S. Navy and the Coast Guard, investigators eventually found the ship's wreckage scattered at the bottom of the ocean east of the Bahamas Islands in waters 15,000 feet deep. But what they didn't find that day was the ship's voyage data recorder, or what we typically refer to as the ship's black box, not unlike the black box we look for in the case of an aircraft incident that records all of the data.

Since we have no survivors, this data recorder is a key piece to getting the information to understand this puzzle of why that ship would sail right into the hurricane. It records and it stores all of the ship's communications. Finding it could shed light on what really happened onboard in those final hours. Despite the search team's exhaustive efforts to locate the data recorder amongst the scattered wreckage, they couldn't find it, and eventually they had to call off the search.

Earlier this year, this Senator wrote to the Chairman of the NTSB and urged him to go back and search again because finding the ship's data recorder is important for us to understand how these 33 human beings who have families back at home were lost. I am here to report that at this very minute, the NTSB is announcing that they are going back to do the search again. At this moment, the NTSB is saying it will resume the search for the ship's black box. This time it will do it with the help of even more sophisticated equipment to help investigators pinpoint the approximate location of the recorder and hopefully, if it is not among the wreckage of the ship, point to its location and pick it up off the ocean floor.

The NTSB's decision today—which I commend; and I thank the Chairman for continuing to keep after this—to search again for the data recorder is a critical step in our understanding of what went so tragically wrong that day. We owe it not only to the families of the lost mariners aboard the El Faro but to the future safety of all those who travel on the high seas. It is up to us to not only understand what happened but to do what we can to ensure that it doesn't happen in the future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.